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HEADLINE: City senator says state funding favors D.C.-area roadwork;
McFadden vows to hold back support if Baltimore doesn't get its fair share

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BODY:

The leader of Baltimore's Senate delegation threatened yesterday to withhold support for major Washington-area transportation projects unless the city gets more money for its own transportation needs.

Sen. Nathaniel J. McFadden made the pledge after hearing Transportation Secretary John D. Porcari list costly Washington-region projects in the works - the new \$2.5 billion Woodrow Wilson Bridge, the \$1.5 billion Intercounty Connector highway and the new \$1.4 billion Purple Line for the Washington Metro System - at a Senate budget committee briefing.

"We get nothing," a frustrated McFadden said after the meeting. "It's shameful and it's unacceptable, and I'm not going to support these things (in Washington) until somebody lets me know about initiatives for the Baltimore area."

The Baltimore Democrat, recently appointed Senate majority leader, said he would try to persuade other city lawmakers to hold out for more money, but it was unclear yesterday how many would join him.

Del. Howard P. Rawlings, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said the Washington-area lawmakers should not be punished for successfully pushing their projects. He said the Baltimore delegation must make an effort to do the same.

After the briefing yesterday, Porcari responded to McFadden's concerns by noting plans to extend Route 43 to Martin State Airport and spend \$400 million widening the Baltimore Beltway. But McFadden wasn't buying it.

"Washington has the ICC, the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the Purple Line. And he's telling me about adding a lane to the Beltway?" asked an incredulous McFadden. He said the state has spent millions revitalizing Baltimore, but those stadiums and job centers and cultural amenities won't do the city any good if no one can get to them.

"We're the economic engine of this state, yet we have a transportation system that is in the dark ages," he said.

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The dispute threatens to re-ignite turf battles between lawmakers from the populous Washington suburbs and the Baltimore region. Several Montgomery County senators said yesterday that they've been waiting for years as money flowed to Baltimore. Now, they say, it's their turn.

"All I can tell you about the pileup for the Washington region is that we've waited so long for our share that it has piled up," said Sen. Ida G. Ruben, a Montgomery County Democrat. "We can't move in the Washington region because there's been such a delay in directing the proper funds to the area."

Porcari said one reason Washington has an extensive subway system is that the city drew up a plan long ago and stuck to it. Baltimore did not, until recently.

Porcari appointed a panel that last year released a rail plan for Baltimore that calls for 66 new miles of track to be laid in the next 40 years. The project would also integrate the fragmented light rail and subway lines that already exist.

Porcari, McFadden and the Montgomery lawmakers did agree on one thing: The state must raise revenues to pay for needed transportation projects. Porcari said that could mean a rise in the gas tax, sales tax or fees such as for vehicle registration.

"There simply isn't money for new projects," Porcari told the budget committee yesterday.

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